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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001708

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2013

TAGS: AEMR AMGT CASC CVIS IZ JO

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: AMMAN SITREP 6 (3/22 0930 LOCAL)

Classified By: Acting DCM Doug Silliman. Reason 1.5 (b,d).

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General Overview  
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¶1. (C) Embassy Amman will remain on "standfast" through March 22.

¶2. (C) Finance Minister Marto told us privately that plans were in the works to raise domestic gasoline and fuel oil prices. The increase was included in the 2003 budget and an initial gasoline price increase of 25 fils/liter (13 cents/gallon) was to have gone into effect on Friday, March 21. However, Marto said that King Abdullah decided the moment was not right politically. Marto was confident, however, that prices for these products, as well as for kerosene and cooking gas, would be increased soon.

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Consular Issues  
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¶3. (U) No new issues to report. The number of consular inquiries remains very small.

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GOJ Actions/Statements  
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¶4. (U) King Abdullah delivered an address on national TV at approximately 2000 local time March 21. The King stressed the importance of "placing our national interest above all interests and considerations," and the primacy of maintaining Jordan's security and stability. He stated that demonstrations in support of "the brotherly Iraqi people" should be "expressed in a civilized manner," and that such "expressions should reflect the true belonging to beloved Jordan." The King ended his address by urging Jordanians to go to work and carry on with daily life, and with assurance that the GOJ was taking measures to ensure the continuity of normal daily life in Jordan.

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Security  
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¶5. (C) Embassy contacts reported media reports (Al Jazeera) that Jordanian Islamic activists are demanding that all Americans leave Jordan. Embassy has been unable to confirm this story through local contacts.

¶6. (C) Embassy contacts reported at 2030 local time March 21 that demonstrations were continuing in the southern Jordanian city of Ma'an. According to these sources, one PSD officer was injured in the demonstrations. Media reports of March 22 indicated "spur of the moment" demonstrations were held March 21 in various locations throughout the country, with some reportedly calling for "Arab armies" to come to the aid of Iraq and Saddam. A Media report indicated that protesters demanded the expulsion of US troops and the US Ambassador at an unlicensed March 21 afternoon demonstration in downtown Amman.

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Refugee/Humanitarian Issues  
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¶7. (C) IOM contacts reported at 2100 local time March 21 that the Jordan-Iraq border remains open. A total of 470 TCN's have crossed into Jordan. The majority are Sudanese; other nationalities include Egyptians, Yemenis, Somalis, Chadians and Eritreans. IOM medical staff report that some arrivals suffer from respiratory infections and exhaustion. No Iraqi refugees/asylum seekers have yet attempted to enter Jordan. An IOM charter flight with 140 Sudanese departed Amman for Khartoum at Midnight March 21. Another 160 Sudanese scheduled to depart the Ruweished camp told IOM officials they feared persecution if they returned home and asked to stay in the camp. Negotiations between the group, Sudanese embassy officials, Jordanian authorities and concerned international agencies are continuing.

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Press

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**18.** (U) No new issues to report.  
GNEHM